Brooch "Woven Curl" 1986
loom woven 18k, 22k tourmaline needles, freshwater pearls
⅞" wide x 6½" long

I n t r o d u c t i o n

DOUGLAS STEAKLEY
Concepts Gallery

Arline Fisch

Arline Fisch has achieved widespread recognition and stature both in the United States and abroad as a result of her successful jewelry career. Although her designs have changed and evolved over the years, they share common threads which make them recognizable and memorable.

I clearly recall first being introduced to Arline's work in the Johnson Wax Exhibition—*OBJECTS USA* in 1969. The large sculptural body pieces made at that time were the precursor for much of the jewelry that has followed. These early pieces were clearly less jewelry and more "clothing" oriented in that they moved with and covered large areas of the body. Arline was connecting forged pieces of metal as though they were fabric and these pieces reflected her interest in fabric manufacturing techniques of weaving and knitting—techniques that recur in many of her subsequent jewelry designs. To my mind the significance of Arline's work stems from the ways in which she stands outside the mainstream of jewelry design and processes. Jewelry is often derived from the engineering qualities of precise techniques and meticulous craftsmanship with a further emphasis on precious materials. Arline, on the other hand, makes bold, gestural statements, often laced with humor, color and irony. Her sustained interest in textile techniques and body ornament from many cultures has allowed her to explore

a variety of non-traditional approaches. This results in jewelry that is truly personal, unique and has the mysterious yet important quality of making a visual statement that is not forgotten. The body of work that Arline has produced for this exhibition is a departure from the work that immediately preceded it. At her recent exhibition with the Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia, knitted jewelry was larger in scale, more colorful and visually more supple. Her current jewelry designs are derived from an exploration into geometric forms: squares, triangles, rectangles and linear movement are repeated themes. These new pieces have a refinement and sophistication that are futher stepping stones in her development and growth as an important contemporary artist. I am particularly pleased to be involved with this exciting one person exhibition of new jewelry by Arline Fisch. At Concepts this is our first venture at participating in the production of an accompanying catalog and our first venture into organizing an exhbition that will travel internationally. Reaching these new plateaus as a small, private gallery seems particularly appropriate as we enter our tenth year. It is important for us to continually rededicate ourselves to exhibiting the finest in contemporary jewelry design and to continue seeking new avenues of reaching and educating the public. I feel that the jewelry being produced today in the United States and Europe is possibly the most important work, the culmination, of all twentieth century jewelry design. I am proud of the contribution we can make as a gallery validating these artists and affirming the importance of their creative efforts.

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

CONCEPTS GALLERY, *Carmel, California; May 1-31, 1987*
CONCEPTS GALLERY, *Palo Alto, California; July 10-August 7, 1987*
WITA GARDINER GALLERY, *San Diego, California; September 12-October 24, 1987*
ELECTRUM GALLERY, *London, England; November, 1987*
GALERIE AM GRABEN, *Vienna, Austria; January, 1988*

Pendant "Three Elephants 1986
loom woven square, 18k, 22k 18k construction, chain
black onyx, ivory elephants
2½" wide x 4½" high

The same goldsmithing techniques have been around for thousands of years, and the same tools used hundreds of years ago are still in use today. However, attitudes toward jewelry and adornment in general have changed for various social reasons, and new materials have recently been added to the more traditional ones; permanence and change alike characterize the work of both goldsmiths and jewelers. Arline Fisch, whom Barbara Cartlidge calls a "master of many various techniques" in her book *20th Century Jewelry,* belongs to those contemporary artists who are able to connect the old and the new with convincing power. Arline Fisch, who is already long known and internationally accepted for her sensational work, created something new when she rediscovered the technique of knitting with precious metal wires for the 20th century because it had never been used in precisely that way. In spite of imitators in the U.S. and elsewhere, this technique is intrinsically connected with her name, and rightly so. It is basically nothing new to stretch gold and silver wires to use as threads in various handiworks. One should recall the gold stitchery on holy gowns and uniforms, the embossing techniques such as the Canetille of the first half of the 19th century, and the various chains and bracelets braided from silver and gold wire. Yet, Arline's technique is truly inno-

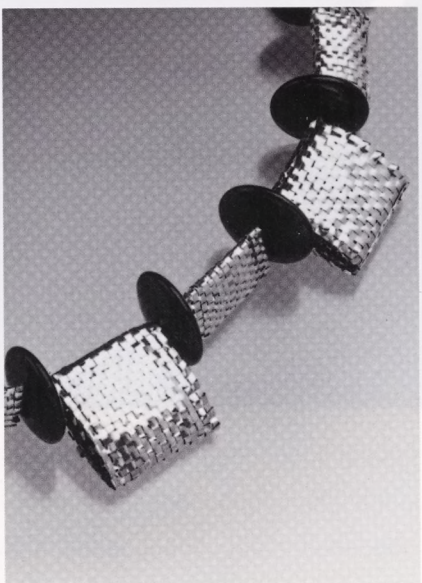
P e r s p e c t i v e s

FRITZ FALK
Director
Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim

vative, and is integrated convincingly into the jewelry art of the 20th century. Her knitted and crocheted pieces, her metal braidings and objects woven in the various colors of metal wires are in loose and fragile relationships as in gold and silver mesh, or are compact, and tight, yet flexible, with the possibility of caressing the neck, arm and finger. All pieces are impressive examples of Arline's creativity and her ability to create forms. In Arline Fisch's creations, the weightlessness and flexibility of the mesh and braiding contrast occasionally with the formal strength and substantial firmness of purposely inserted massive parts such as gold and silver plates, large settings for precious stones, frames, and clasps. Such contrasting tensions add further attraction. Arline Fisch was surely the first who devoted herself to this type of metal work, and the fact that she didn't keep this technique to herself, but instead has written a "how-to" book about it, proves her high principles. Although meanwhile there are many who use this technique in various creative ways, Arline Fisch is rightly regarded the master of precious metal wire construction.

Bracelets "Arch Forms" 1987
loom woven 18k (left) 14k, black onyx (right) sterling silver, oxidized, mosaic stone
⅞" x 4⅛"

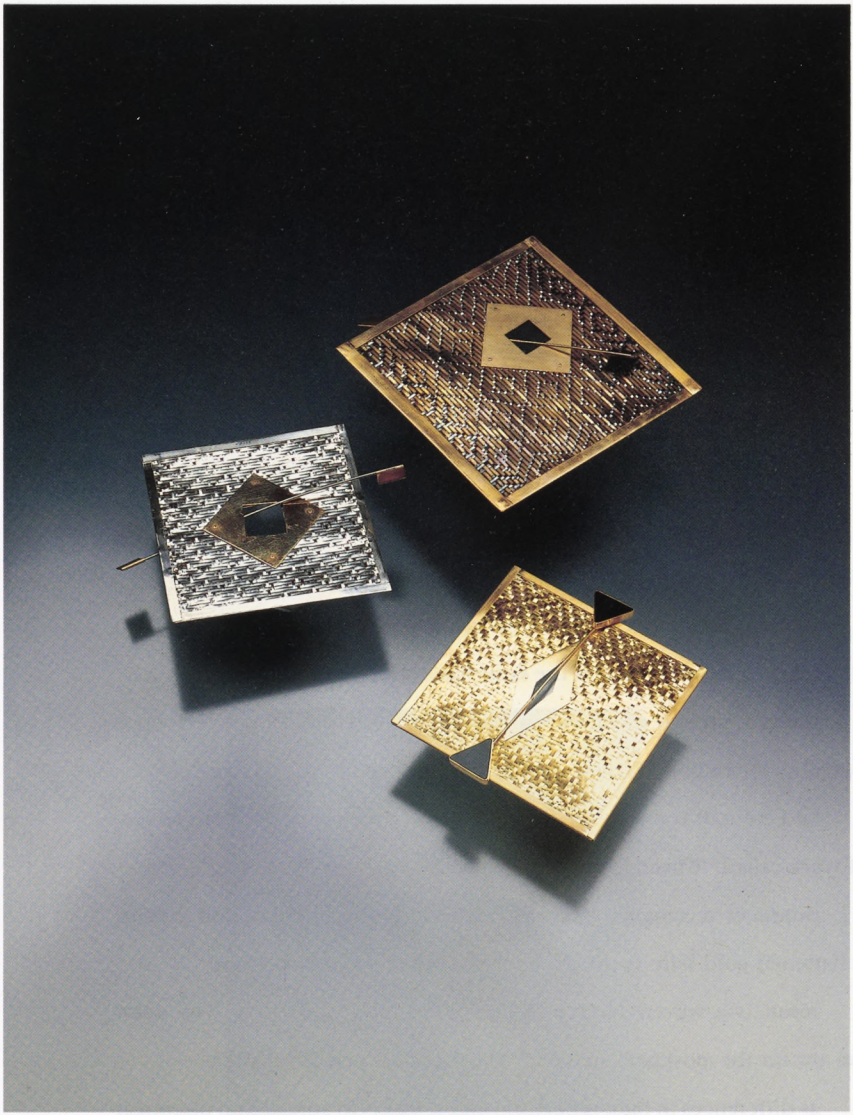
Necklace "Folded Square Beads" 1987
loom woven 14k yellow, white, 18k black onyx beads
9" diameter



V i e w

ARLINE M. FISCH
San Diego, 1987

Interlacing, the simple over/under structure of braiding and plaiting is an elemental system discovered and developed over and over again throughout human history. Weaving, whether with or without a loom is another, if later manifestation of the same basic structure which produces form and pattern simultaneously. Within the simple system is the possibility for endless variation and permutation of pattern, texture and color. It is the variations on a theme which motivates this collection of work called "Woven Gold". Loom weaving by its nature produces rectangular planes which are both patterned and pliable. When flattened gold wire is the material of both warp and weft the result is a woven surface of great richness and subtlety. The color changes are, for the most part, minimal. The pattern is perceived more as differences in light reflection, and it seems to appear and disappear mysteriously as the plane shifts in space. To focus attention on this unique attribute of woven metal the forms have been kept very simple —squares and rectangles, sometimes folded to produce triangles, cylinders or pillow shapes. The glory is the surface; the challenge is to capture the mystery and light in pieces which appear to float across the body. Flat braids can be made in hundreds of variations determined by the number of elements and the sequences used to interlace

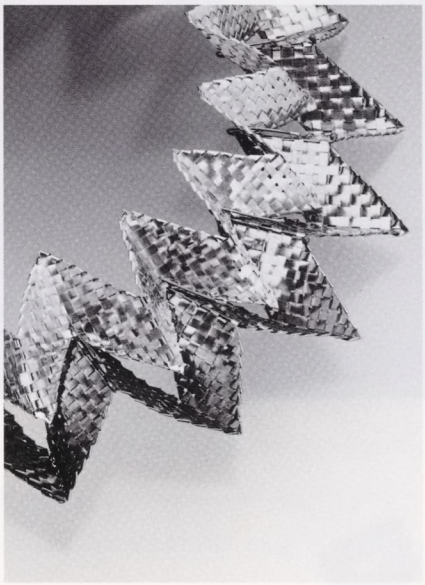


Three Brooches "Floating Squares" 1986-87
(top) loom woven 14k, oxidized fine silver, reversible
(left) loom woven platinum, 18k center, reversible
(right) loom woven 18k, 22k black onyx
4" x 4", 3" x 3", 3" x 3"

Necklace "Seven Woven Squares" 1987
loom woven 18k, 22k 18k edges, neckwire
squares: 2″ x 2″ 5½″ inner diameter

them into a structure. The so-called "Peruvian Zigzag" braid is my particular favorite because it results in a dramatic silhouette of opposing serrated edges resembling a lightning bolt. When made in metal it can be folded and compressed to produce a dynamic tension in the woven plane as well as a strong dark and light rhythm to the surface reflections. It suggests energy, speed and direction in opposition to the quiet, contemplative nature of the woven square. The braided forms, then, provide a dramatic contrast of form and spirit within the definition of interlaced structures. The making of this collection in gold and platinum has been a period of discipline and concentration, of focusing attention on work which is subtle rather than flamboyant, quiet rather than theatrical, restrained in form and material. Within these self-imposed restrictions I have sought for elegance and drama, for a profound connection to the mystery of "gold", that most ancient and sacred of materials, within the requirements of an urban late 20th century society. I have tried to do this in my own "words" as a continuation of my personal vision of jewelry as a significant contributor to the joy, beauty and delight of the individual who wears it. I was encouraged to undertake this endeavor by the commitment and enthusiasm of the galleries which are showing my work. I am grateful for their support and participation in this project.

Necklace "Double Zigzag" 1987
braid construction, 18k fine silver, oxidized mosaic stone
5″ inner diameter



Necklace "Eight Folded Squares" 1987
loom woven 18k, 22k *spacer beads: 14k, bone* *neckwire: 14k*
squares: 1½″ x 1½″ beads: ⅝″ diameter wire: 7″ diameter

A s s e s s m e n t

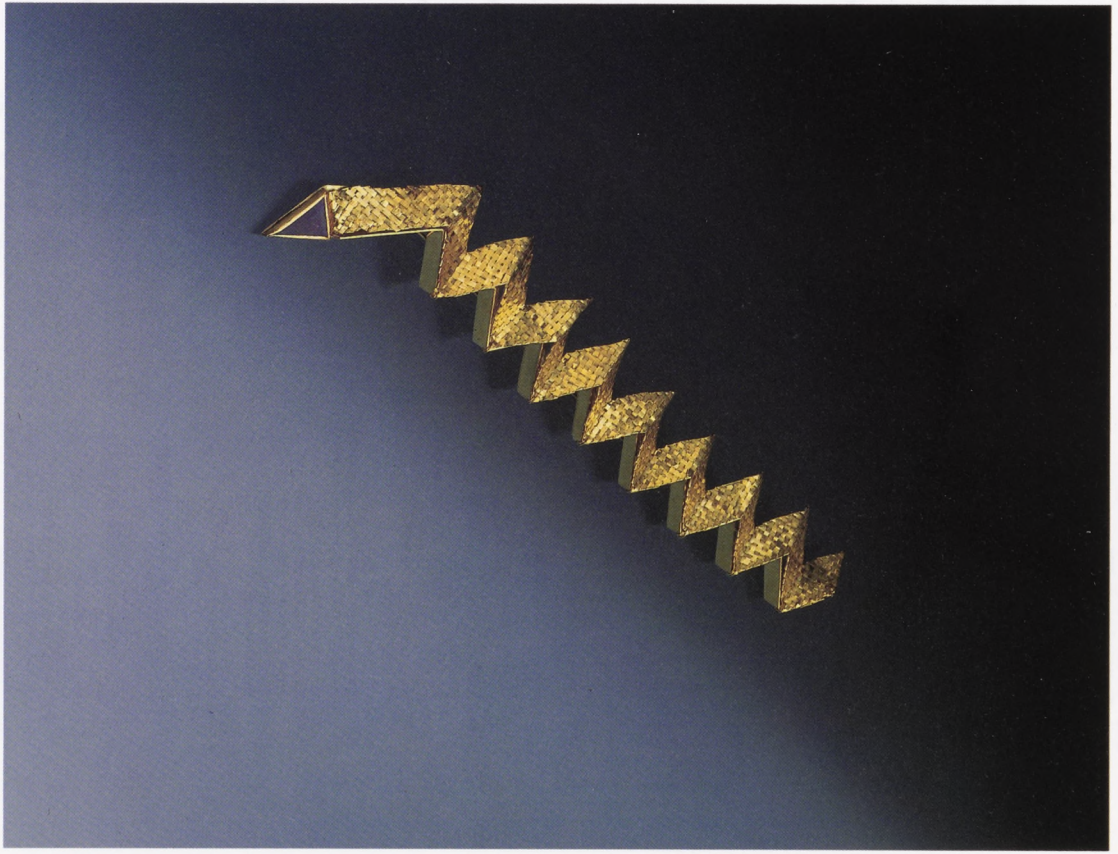
BARBARA CARTLIDGE
Electrum Gallery
London, 1987

The art and craft of weaving, almost as old as mankind itself, has always played a vital role in the cultures of people all over the world. Beyond its obvious practical application, it appears in folk-lore and fairy-tales as a recurring theme, whereby people with extra-ordinary powers could construct magic fabrics and unbreakable cords. Gossamer threads and finely spun gold figure largely as the components of special garments and accessories, capable of enabling the wearer to assume super-power or as protection against evil. In that light, it is easy to understand how the combination of the practical and the magic can become so irresistibly attractive to artists, and jewellers in particular. For Arline Fisch it has held a constant appeal, one that has fired her imagination to the point where she has brought the art into a new dimension.

Arline Fisch's jewellery clearly demonstrates her extra-ordinary power with which she has adapted the time-honoured technique to create contemporary and innovative designs of great beauty and classical appeal. She has a deep understanding of the true meaning and function of jewellery, a knowledge that helps her to find that perfect balance of shape, size and tactile quality, so essential to an artefact in the immediate personal environment of another person. Over some three decades now, Arline Fisch has developed her unique designs, constantly exploring many different techniques with meticulous research. She has travelled far and wide to see an enormous variety of ancient and ethnic jewellery, as well as study the various traditional techniques in that field as still practised by craftsmen in other parts of the world. Observing and absorbing such diverse designs and practices is, however, only part of the story. Building on and extending the experience, Arline Fisch has developed highly original concepts which give each piece of her

jewellery that unique appearance so unmistakable of her work. Her masterly skills allow her an immense freedom to express herself in terms of metal, an enviable talent in itself. At the same time, she is most generous in sharing the gains of her experience and wide knowledge of the subject with others. In her search to extend the accepted forms of jewellery, her interest turned to textile techniques about fifteen years ago. In 1975 she wrote an excellent book, 'Textile Techniques in Metal' published by Van Nostrand, which has since become the standard textbook on the craft. Although her interest also includes knitting and crochet, this exhibition is devoted entirely to weaving with precious metals like silver, gold and platinum. Far beyond the obvious advantages of flexibility, which is so desirable in jewellery to allow for body contour and movement, the technique of weaving offers variety of colour by bringing different metals together. It can produce fascinating patterns and textures that reflect the light differently than planes of sheet metal. Moreover, it can be folded, pleated, fluted—compressed or extended like 'fabric' into three-dimensional structures which can hold their shape. This new collection of jewellery by Arline Fisch shows a marked progression from her past work as seen in the refinement of her over-all shapes to still bold, but more basic forms of triangle, rectangle or square. These work well in contrast to the more complex, intricate patterns of the woven sections which she accentuates with the addition of a coloured stone or feathers, pearls or ivory. Coming back to the magic, it is that enchanting quality of Arline Fisch's jewellery which appeals so strongly to the imagination and can thereby merge so easily with the wearer's personality, lifts it out of the ordinary into something very special.

Brooch "Zigzag" 1986
braid construction, 18k purple sugalite
1½" wide x 6½" long



Biography

1952 B.S. in Art, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

1954 M.A. in Art, University of Illinois

1956 Fulbright Grant for study in Denmark at Kunsthaandvaerkerskolen, Copenhagen

1957 Instructor in Art, Skidmore College

1961 Assistant Professor, San Diego State University. Started Jewelry program in Art Department, SDSU

1963 Study Tour to Central and South America

1964 First World Craft Conference, NYC

1966 Fulbright Research Grant to Denmark

1968 Purchase of work, Objects USA, Johnson Wax Collection
World Crafts Conference, Peru

1970 Research Project "Fire Gilding on Silver"
WCC Conference in Dublin, Lecture
Founding Member, Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG)

1971 Sabbatical Leave in London and Copenhagen;
Gold Medal, "Form and Quality", Munich
Purchase of work, Worshipful Co. of Goldsmiths, London

1972 Craftsman Trustee, American Crafts Council (3 year term)
Lecture Tour to Australia sponsored by Crafts Council of Australia
WCC Conference, Istanbul, National delegate

1973 Trustee, Haystack Mt. School of Crafts
Lecturer, Craft Symposium, Edinburgh

1974 National Endowment for the Arts Craftsmen's Fellowship
WCC Conference, Toronto, Workshop Leader

1975 Publication of book, "Textile Techniques in Metal"
Workshop Tour to Australia
Visiting Professor, Boston University, Program in Artisanry

1976 Vice President for North America, WCC (5 year term)
WCC Conference, Mexico, Workshop Coordinator
Commissioner, US National Commission for UNESCO (6 year term)
Bicentennial Project, Alcoa Aluminum

1977 NEA Craftman/Apprenticeship Grant
Designer, Reed and Barton, "Signature V" Jewelry Collection

1978 Keynote Speaker, WCC Conference, Kyoto
San Diego State University Mini Grant

1979 Elected, Fellow of the American Craft Council
NEA Workshop/Platinum Jewelry Workshop Project
Sabbatical Leave in London
Lectures at art schools in England and Scotland

1980 Award, Texture in Gold competition, Germany
WCC Conference, Vienna, Program Consultant

1981 NEA Research Grant/Customs Regulations
20th anniversary exhibition, San Diego State University Jewelry Program

1982 Fulbright Lecture Grant to Austria
Guest Professor, Metallgestaltung, Hochschule fur angewandte Kunst in Wien
Seminar, Sir John Cass College, London
President, Society of North American Goldsmiths

1983 Secretary, WCC

1984 First International Summer Seminar, San Diego State University
WCC Executive Meetings, Oslo, Norway
Purchase of work, Trondheim, and Oslo, Norway

1985 Declared "Living Treasure of California"
Visiting Artist, Cranbrook Academy
Workshop, Western Australia Institute of Technology, Perth

1986 WCC Conference, Indonesia
Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award, Skidmore College
Purchase of work, Oakland Museum, CA

Selected Exhibitions

1958 "Young Americans", Museum of Contemporary Crafts, NYC
"Fulbright Designers"

1962 "Young Americans", Museum of Contemporary Crafts, NYC

1964 USIA Travelling Exhibition to Latin America

1965 "Design Nine", Pasadena

1968 "California Design Ten", Pasadena
"Form and Quality", International Jewellery Exhibition, Munich

1969 "Objects USA"

1970 "Goldsmith 70", Minnesota Museum of Art

1971 "California Design XI"
"Form and Quality", Munich
"Schmuck—Objekte", Museum Bellerive, Zurich

1972 "5000 Years of Gold Jewellery", London

1973 "Tendenzen—73", Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim
"73 International Jewellery Arts Exhibition", Tokyo

1974 First World Crafts Council Exhibition
"Kreativer Schmuck", Basel
"Goldsmiths", Renwick Gallery

1975 "Contemporary Crafts of the Americas"
"California Design 12", Los Angeles

1976 "Six Contemporary American Jewellers", Electrum Gallery, London
"The Metalsmith" SNAG exhibition

1977 "Schmuck 77—Tendenzen", Pforzheim

1978 "Craft Art and Religion", Vatican Museum, Rome
"Modern American Jewelry", Tokyo

E x h i b i t i o n s

1979 "Fourth Tokyo Triennale", SNAG European Exhibition

1980 "Schmuck International", Vienna

1981 "Good as Gold", Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
"Textures in Gold", Schwabisch Gmund
"Two Decades of Metal", San Diego State University Gallery

1982 "The Fan/New Form", Arrowmont, TN

1983 International Jewellery Art Exhibition, Tokyo/Osaka

1984 "Jewelery USA", American Craft Museum, NYC
"Contemporary Jewellery", National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
25th Anniversary International Jewellery Exhibition, Munich

1985 "American Jewelry Now", USIA Tour
"California Crafts XIV", Sacramento
"20th Century Jewellery", London

1986 International Jewellery Exhibition, Tokyo
"Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical", American Craft Museum, NYC
"Perspectives",New Platinum Jewellery

One Person Exhibitions

1962 Pasadena Museum of Art, California

1965 Wooden Horse Gallery, Laguna Beach,

1967 Kunstindustrimuseet, Copenhagen

1968 Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York
Museum West, San Francisco, CA

1969 The Egg and Eye Gallery, Los Angeles,

1970 The Gallery, Denver, Colo.

1971 Goldsmiths Hall, London
Lee Nordness Galleries, NY

1973 The Slocumb Gallery, TN

1975 Florence Duhl Gallery, NY
Festival Hall, Adelaide, Australia

1977 Southwest Missouri State University

1980 Electrum Gallery, London

1982 Museum fur angewandte Kunst, Vienna

1983 Electrum Gallery, London
Plum Gallery, Washington, D.C.

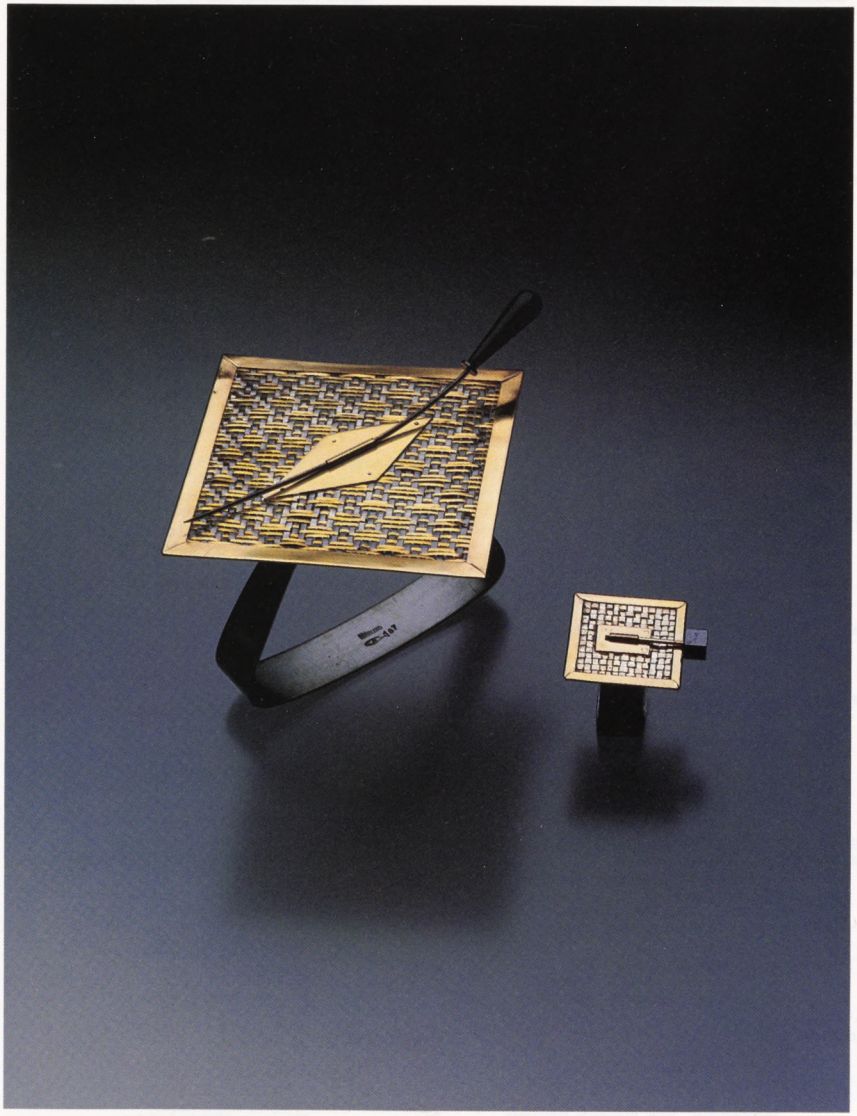
1985 Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

1986 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
Maker's Mark, Melbourne

1987 Concepts Gallery, Carmel and Palo Alto, CA
Wita Gardiner Gallery, San Diego, CA
Electrum Gallery, London

Collections

Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA
Vatican Museum, Rome
American Craft Museum, NYC
Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, MN
Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London, England
Objects: USA, The Johnson Wax Collection
Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL
Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, Germany
Museum of Applied Art, Trondheim, Norway
Kunstindustrimuseum, Oslo, Norway
Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, Scotland
National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan
Helen Williams Drutt Modern Jewelry Collection
Numerous private collections in the U.S and Europe



Bracelet, Ring "Floating Squares" 1987
bracelet: loom woven 18k, fine silver oxidized 14k edges, center; sterling silver armband, reversible, 2⅞" x 2⅞"
ring: loom woven 14k yellow, white 14k edges, center sterling silver band oxidized hematite bead ⅞" x ⅜" x 1"